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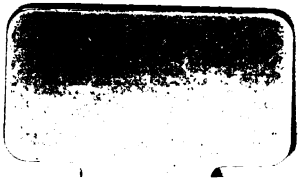

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NOT AT HOME:

A DRAMATIC ENTERTAINMENT,

AS PERFORMED,

WITH GENERAL APPROBATION,

BY

THE DRURY LANE COMPANY,

AT

The Lyceum Theatre.

WRITTEN BY R. C. DALLAS, ESQ.
Author of Elements of Self-Knowledge, Percival, Aubrey, &c.

LONDON:
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PREFACE.

I OFFER *this Trifle in print to the Public with a considerable degree of diffidence, as I am apprehensive that it is a heterogeneous production. The scenes between Lovell and his wife, according to the observation of an ingenuous critic, belongs more to Comedy than to Farce, while the character of Spectre, so far as it relates to the transformation of his person, as it is performed, extends to the utmost verge of broad farce. It is, however, my first attempt for the Theatre, and the encouragement I have received from the Managers, the Performers, Strangers to me behind the curtain, and I will be bold to say, the Public, is an earnest that these pages will be received with indulgence. In saying the* PUBLIC, *I am glad of this opportunity of stating what I mean by that word at a Theatre. I mean that cultivated Company who usually occupy the circle of dress boxes; I mean those judicious Critics who take their station in the Pit; I mean my worthy friend John Bull, who is to be found in either Gallery, and in whose bosom Nature always displays itself: but I do not mean the self-conceited, ephemeral Pseudo-critics of the age, who, after attempting in vain to foist their writings on the public, have sunk into the critics immortalized by Pope:*

> Some have at first for Wits, then Poets past,
> Turn'd Critics next, and prov'd plain Fools at last.
> Some neither can for Wits nor Critics pass,
> As heavy mules are neither horse nor ass.
> Those half-learn'd witlings, numerous in our isle
> As half form'd insects on the banks of Nile:
> Unfinished things one knows not what to call,
> Their generation is so equivocal: &c.
>
> *Essay on Criticism.*

Neither do I mean those rare spirits who love to make a noise in the slips of a theatre, and to condemn what they

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do not understand. If such creatures excited the momentary pain of indignation, how was it overpaid by the enjoyment I experienced for successive nights at the theatre, when, in spite of whatever defects the Piece may have, I myself, whtle unobserved, saw approbation in the smiles of elegant society, and in the laugh of honest nature; by the enjoyment of hearing the manager say, on the third night, "it rises,"— by the enjoyment of seeing that I had interested every performer in the piece. To me the pleasure that arises from fame is not worth mentioning compared to that which such interest gives. The smile, the shake of the hand, and, on the first night, the "come, come, the plaudits have it," were very sweet. Not that I thought the piece safe at the time against the Pseudo-critics; but because the kind effusions of the heart are to me the most valuable fortune of life: and know, ye witlings! that Providence has in this placed me far beyond your reach. I know too well the object of your abuse to mention the obscure papers in which it lies. You think, after abandoning the pursuit of fame, to work yourselves into profit, by provoking contention as critics; but buz on, I shall not contend with you. To the candid critic, who, while he points out faults, knows how to convey strictures at once in the language of a Scholar and a Gentleman, I shall ever bow most humbly; though at the same time I would, in the present instance, deprecate the severity of his lash, by declaring that I never considered this Piece in any other light, than as a temporary trifle, which I hoped might amuse for a while.

The only objection I shall take notice of is, that the Story of the slandered maid, Miss Melvil, is taken from a publication of my own. If there be any guilt in this, I plead guilty. But the dramatizing of known

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stories has been frequent, and never before objected to. Besides, little use is made of it; much less than I originally meant: for, it seems to be now the universal opinion that the very ideas of morality and farce are incongruous. I can only say that I am sorry for it, and that I cannot comprehend why Mirth and Virtue should be separated: but so it is, as far as respects this species of entertainment. I have been advised by a sensible friend to throw out the serious matter altogether, and confine the scenes to the jealousy of Lovell, and the conceit of Spectre. Whatever I may submit to for stage effect, and to comply with the taste of others, in representation, I cannot think it right to curtail in printing, what I am most ambitious of valuing myself upon, passages, that tend to mend the heart, and to guard virtue.

It is usual in the Preface to a new piece to make acknowledgments to the Performers, but my sentiments and feelings are so well known already to those whom I should have to thank, that I am convinced they will excuse me from inserting here a list of their names, which stand in the page before the first act. Their public merits need not my praise, their private kindness commands my gratitude.

However diffident I am of my own production, I feel the reverse respecting the Prologue. It was once intended to be spoken, but upon consideration was judged too long. I am fully confident, however, that the Public will read it with pleasure. It is perhaps more entitled to the appellation of a beautiful Poem, than to that of a Prologue, and I have no doubt that it will be deemed worthy the pen of the Author of HORÆ IONICÆ, *a Poem descriptive of the Ionian Isles, which has received unbounded praise from most of the Periodical Critics, and which no genuine critic or classical reader can peruse without delight and admiration.*

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PROLOGUE,

As intended to have been spoken.

Written by WALLER RODWELL WRIGHT, *Esq.**

OUR Author, anxious for your approbation,
Has sent me here by way of preparation;
But undetermined still what means to use,
To recommend this bantling of his Muse:
From thought to thought with double haste he rov'd,
As fancy led or judgment disapproved:
I could not bear to see him thus perplex'd,
So cried, "Ill take your title for my text."
At home, or *not at home*—Oh! tis a theme
As vast as Folly's never-failing stream,
Why, *Not at home's* the voice of modern days,
Which every age, and sex, and rank displays;
And Coxcombs, from the 'Prentice to the Peer,
Disdain the limits of their proper sphere.—
Observe my Lord—the copy of his groom—
In all the scenes of vulgar life *at home*;
At home to all the Pugilistic train,
Lord of the ring and hero of the rein:
But *not at home* when tradesmen would be paid,
Or worth and genius supplicate his aid;
And least *at home*, Oh! mean and groveling mind!
In that high station which his birth assigned.
In those dull moments when *ennui* prevails,
And beaux forget to call, and scandal fails,
What dame of fashion e'er can condescend
At home the solitary hours to spend?
At home! Oh monstrous! is there then no way
To kill the languor of the irksome day?
Call my barouche! I'll drive to lady Bloom:
Our mutual watchword still is—*Not at home:*
And Mrs. Shuttle, odious, rustic creature!
Whose suppers we endure from mere good nature.

* Author of the Poem, entitled HORÆ IONICÆ, mentioned in the Preface.

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Brisk at his post, and practised in reply,
The powdered footman tells the ready lie:
Not so the simple lad just come to town,
Scarce half a coxcomb, more than half a clown,
With awkward shame he turns his head away,
And blushing stammers—*Not at home* to-day.
To Bond Street next, to cheapen fans and laces,
Or buy at Overton's the Loves and Graces.
These follies drive away the morning spleen;
Rout, Opera, Concert close the evening scene.
Thus having trod the giddy circle o'er,
Till fashion palls, and folly charms no more,
Listless and tir'd, at length she condescends
To pass one night *at home*—but *sees her friends.*
Forth fly a thousand cards, and each conveys
Her summons, couched in true Laconic phrase:
Her Ladyship *at home.*—Well! view her there:
Order your coach at ten to Berkeley square;
Along the crowded staircase force your way,
Where costly flowers their mingled sweets display:
Approach the long saloon where, blazing bright,
Rich chandeliers refract the varied light.
Her sofa deck'd with oriental pride,
All Egypt's monsters grinning at her side,
Midst shapeless mockeries of Greece and Rome,
In tawdry pomp—my lady is *at home.*
While these gay scenes her restless thoughts employ,
She scarcely feels a transient gleam of joy;
With vacant eye reviews the splendid dome,
And sighs that—Happiness—is *not at home.*
Not such *their* HOME whom Love has taught to know
From that blest source what real transports flow.
HOME! 'tis the name of all that sweetens life;
It speaks the warm affection of a wife,
The lisping babe that prattles on the knee
In all the playful grace of infancy,
The spot where fond parental love may trace
The growing virtues of a blooming race:
Oh! 'tis a word of more than magic spell,
Whose sacred power the wanderer best can tell;
He who, long distant from his native land,
Feels at her name his eager soul expand:
Whether as Patriot, Husband, Father, Friend;
To that dear point his thoughts, his wishes bend;
And still he owns, where'er his footsteps roam,
Life's choicest blessings centre all—*at home.*

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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

Lovell	Mr. MELVIN.
Fitzalban	Mr. DECAMP.
Spectre	Mr. MATHEWS.
Lord Sedley	Mr. HOLLAND.
Dawson	Mr. I. SMITH.
Cuffee	Mr. OXBERRY.

WOMEN.

Mrs. Lovell	Mrs. ORGER.
Mrs. Melvil	Mrs. MADDOX.
Emily Melvil	Mrs. MATHEWS.
Lucy	Mrs. SCOTT.
Martha	Miss TIDSWELL.

Gentlemen, Groom, Apothecary, Waiter, &c.

SCENE, ST. IVES.

The Passages within inverted commas were omitted in the representation.

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NOT AT HOME.

ACT I.

SCENE. *A Room at Mrs. Melvil's.*

EMILY *and* LUCY *discovered.*

LUCY.

DEAR Miss Emily! Pray dont take it so much to heart. I would not mind such a vile, slanderous, cruel set, that could desert me without reason.

Emily. You are mistaken, Lucy. It is not without apparent reason that the world have given me up. Lord Sedley's arts were deeply contrived. He conceived that the loss of reputation would be followed by the loss of virtue.—No! I blame not the world.

Lucy. Is'nt it odd, my dear Miss Emily, that that handsome young man, who had like to have broken his neck in our lane, has never come again to thank my mistress for the care she took of him that night? Lord Ma'am! I wish you had staid and seen him. Mr. Fitzalban is no Lord Sedley, I'll be sworn.

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Emily. Mr. Fitzalban is nothing to me.

Lucy. Oh! I wish he was!

Emily. Cease trifling. Did you see Martha last night?

Lucy. I did ma'am. The good old woman sent you a thousand blessings, and expects you this afternoon.

Emily. Leave me, I wish to be alone.

Lucy. *(aside.)* Poor thing! [*Exit.*

Emily. Not care for the opinion of the world! How is that possible? In vain my heart tells me I am innocent. It is galling, very galling to be shunned; to be spoken of as a frail and guilty creature, lost to honour, a disgrace to my sex.—To be the victim of so foul a falsehood!

Rondeau.—plaintive.

THE SLANDERED MAID.

Nay let the stricken deer, poor thing!
Go weep and sigh and languish,
Till balmy death remove the sting
Of undeserved anguish.

The guileless maid with danger treads
The purest paths of joy;
Or love for her his trammels spreads,
Or slander's shafts destroy.
Nay, let the, &c.

And let the slandered maid go weep,
Remote from ev'ry eye;
With sainted spirits vigils keep,
And wait her hour to die.
Nay let the, &c.

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Enter FITZALBAN *gently through a garden door, during the last verse, and appears in admiration.*

Fitz. Most musical, most melancholy!

Emily. (*starting.*) Heavens!

Fitz. Forgive me, madam.

Emily. Sir!

Fitz. This, madam, I presume, is Mrs. Melvil's house.

Emily. It is, sir.

Fitz. I have the honour to be known to her—the good fortune to be obliged to her.

Emily. (*recollecting him.*) I beg your pardon—I recollect—pray take a chair—I will call my mother directly. [*Exit.*

Fitz. (*looking after her.*) Mother!—What an angelic daughter! If her understanding be equal to her beauty, faith Fitzalban! thou wilt have to surrender thy heart at discretion.

Enter MRS. MELVIL.

Mrs. M. I am glad to see you well, sir,

Fitz. I blush madam to think that I have suffered a whole week to pass without repeating my thanks for the hospitality I received under this roof.

Mrs. M. I beg you will think no more of it.

Fitz. (*aside.*) I'm afraid this angel does not mean to return. Shall I not have the pleasure of seeing Miss Melvil?

Mrs. M. Surely.—Lucy!—We live in a very retired way, Mr. Fitzalban.—Lucy!

Enter LUCY.

Mrs. M. Tell Miss Melvil we shall be glad of her company.

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Lucy. She is just gone out, ma'am, to walk.

Fitz. Walk! eh! into the garden? (*Lucy courtsies.*) Yours is a delightful garden, ma'am!—Shall we? A very delightful garden, ma'am—I long to see it.—Pray ma'am.

(*Hands* MRS. M. *out before she can answer.*)

Lucy. A delightful garden, Ma'am! I long to see it;—pray Ma'am!—If that is not a proper spirit, I don't know whatsis. He has a falling-in-love eye—Lud! Lud! My dear, dear Miss Emily!

[*Exit.*

SCENE. *Before Lovell's House.*

Enter LORD SEDLEY *and* DAWSON.

Lord Sedley. I remember to have seen Fitzalban at Cambridge, but we never associated. For what is he intended?

Dawson. He inherits a large estate in Shropshire.

Lord Sedley. Do you know what brings him to St. Ives?

Dawson, No—we will join him at the Inn after our visit to Lovell.

Lord Sedley. We must not stay long here.

Dawson. Unless there be a peculiar charm in the sound of Lord Sedley's title, the visit will not retard our return to the Inn. I am seldom allowed to find either of them at home.

Lord Sedley. It is very odd.

Dawson. Not at all. Lovell, a complete libertine, who, like Lord Sedley, held every woman to be at heart a rake, and who scrupled not to overleap every barrier to his desires, has found a woman, who has contrived to deprive him of

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that liberty, which, like you, he had so repeatedly sworn never to forego.

Lord Sedley. Ha! ha! ha! good! good!

Dawson. He continues desperately enamoured.

Lord Sedley. How long has he been married?

Dawson. A natural question. They are in their second year.

Lord Sedley, Ha, ha! And he doubts her, eh?

Dawson. Of her honour he has no fear, if left to herself; but, then, the arts he has himself practised on women are perpetually present to his imagination, and he suspects every likely fellow that enters his doors.

Lord Sedley. Ha, ha, ha! Why the devil did he marry?

Dawson. Because marriage, or relinquishing his object, was the alternative.—And what think you is the plan he has fallen upon now to secure her heart?

Lord Sedley. He does not lock her up I hope.

Dawson. No, no! no, no! a much better plan.

Lord Sedley. What is it?

Dawson. He is resolved to be more pleasing in her eyes than any other man.

Lord Sedley. That indeed!—If it were possible in defiance of time and nature.

Dawson. (looking out) Here comes a youth will let your Lordship into the secret, and facilitate my explanation. His name is Spectre.

Lord Sedley. Surely he will not be admitted.

Dawson. Oh, yes! he will.

Lord Sedley. Why, he's not so ugly neither.

Dawson. No, but before he enters the house he will contrive to make himself the ugliest fellow in the world. Thus disguised he will gain admittance. Lovell, unsuspicious of the stratagem,

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takes him to his bosom, as his friend. But here he comes.

(They stand aside.)

Enter SPECTRE.

He is meagre, and appears dressed outré, with a towering cape, a black dashing wig, and a smart hat, which is so contrived that the crown can be raised or flattened to the head—a pocket glass in his hand, he examines himself as he advances.

Spectre. This lovely woman has made me a man—Love is the spring of all the fine feelings —*(striking his breast, and standing affectedly)* Lovely, lovely sex! *(sighs)* Yet cruel as lovely! Oh, that Mrs. Lovell could be brought to abate a little of her purity! This *(looking at his glass)* this is a very becoming wig—a very becoming wig—a charming pudding this! *(raising his neckcloth)* But, my friend Lovell must not see me in this trim—Before I knock I must disguise my figure.

Retires to the bottom to alter his appearance: he throws down the high cape of his coat, which flaps over his shoulders, flattens his hat, takes off the pudding neckcloth, leaving a narrow stock visible. The neckcloth he puts into a side pocket, pulls off the dashing black wig, and discovers a carroty shock head of hair with a high forehead. The wig he puts into another pocket. While he is thus employed, the dialogue is continued between Lord S. *and* Dawson, *who come forward laughing.*

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Dawson. That creature, my Lord, is one of the most agreeable men Lovell admits into his house. You will no longer wonder that there is no danger of his being supplanted in her affection.

Lord S. It would puzzle him to find such another ugly dog.

Dawson. Oh no! He is the handsomest of the whole set. All his men servants are as ugly as sin, the negro excepted, but he relies on his colour. His tradesmen are chosen by their gradation in hideousness. (*standing aside.*)

Spectre *coming forward.*

Spectre. I have read somewhere that Cupid is the real Proteus, who by assuming all forms pleases all tastes—for there is no accounting for tastes.

(*Knocks at* Lovell's *door.*)

(Cuffee *opens the door.*)

Cuffee. Ah! Massa 'Pectre! please walk in, sa—Massa up 'taize.

Spectre. So much the worse! I hope to be luckier another time.

(*Goes in, singing, "Such a beauty I did grow."* *Cuffee shuts the door.*)

Lord S. *and* Dawson *laugh.*

Lord. S. Who have we here? a visitor?

Dawson. He'll not be admitted.

(*A gentleman of a gay appearance crosses the stage, and knocks at* Lovell's *door, which is opened by* Cuffee.)

Gent. Mr. Lovell?

Cuffee. (*surveying him.*) Not at home, sa.

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Gent. Mrs. Lovell?

Cuffee. Oh no! Not at home.

(Gentleman *leaves a card and exit.—door shut.*)

Dawson. I told you so.

(*Enter another* Gentleman *booted and spurred, knocks, and* Cuffee *opens.*

Gent. How do ye, Cuffee?

Cuffee. Tank you, sa.

Gent. Your master?

Cuffee. No sa! Not at home.

Gent. How is your mistress, Cuffee?

Cuffee. Misses not well at all, massa.

Gent. I'll go up and ask her how she does.

Cuffee. Misses not at home, sa.

Gent. You said she was ill.

Cuffee. Hih! Misses no so ill but she can go take a ride.

Gent. Oh! which way is she gone?

Cuffee. (*after a short pause.*) De Huntingdon road, sa.

Gent. I'll mount my horse and ride that way. (*Cuffee turns his head and laughs.*) If I miss her, remember to tell her this is the third time I have called. [*Exit.*

Cuffee. You ride far enough before you ketch her, he, he, he! Da his own faw't for not take civil answer at first—he, he, he! he!

Exit, and shuts the door.

Lord S. Ha, ha, ha! and so this poor woman is to be kept from the sight of every human countenance.—Stay, the door opens.

(*Lovell's door opens, a person comes out and crosses the stage.*)

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Dawson. That's his apothecary. The deep pits of the small-pox were his recommendations, and they were powerfully enforced by the long tamboured skirts of his pompadour waistcoat.

Lord S. Ha, ha, ha! Come, its our turn.

Dawson. To be dismissed.

They knock, Cuffee *opens.*

Dawson. Mr. Lovell?

Cuffee. Not at home, sa.

Lord S. Mrs. Lovell?

Cuffee. Not at home, sa.

They leave cards, and exeunt laughing.

Cuffee. He, he! Dey damn deal too handsome for come in here. [*Exit.*

SCENE.—*A room in Lovell's house: a table with chemical apparatus upon it.*

(Mr. *and* Mrs. Lovell *at another table with books;* Lovell *in a morning gown.*)

Lovell. That's right; you are an apt scholar, Fanny.

" *Mrs. L.* It is so clear. Put sugar in water, it " melts, for having an affinity with oxygen and " hydrogen, it dissolves and combines; and if there " is such a quantity—a very great quantity, it sa- " turates: whereas put magnesia in water, it sinks, " and that's precipitating. Extracting the spirit of " any thing by condensing vapour is called dis- " tilling, and double distilling is subliming—

" *Lovell.* No, no!—rectifying." Is not chemistry a charming study?

(*They come forward.*

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Mrs. L. Yes, but I like botany better.

Lovell. Why?

Mrs. L. The plants make love so sweetly, you know: their aromatic sighs are so delightful.

Lovell. But that's the chemistry of nature. Chemistry is the soul of love. "Not a plant that sheds "its perfume, or a turtle-dove that coos its fondness, "but is the creature of chemistry." But this would lead us too far at present, and I must prepare for my appointment at Huntingdon. Now, my dear Fanny, is not this feast of reason and this flow of soul a life far preferable to all the foolish flatteries of a parcel of buzzing coxcombs that infest the atmosphere in the rays of beauty?

Mrs. L. Nothing, my dear Henry, can be more delightful than the improvement of the mind.

Lovell. *(fondling her)* Then it is so pleasing to think you are all my own—all my own, Fanny,—that no other—Not that I have any tincture of jealousy in my disposition, my love.

Mrs. L. Oh dear! jealousy!

Lovell. No, no, no! It is merely the delight I take in having you all my own—you understand me.

Mrs. L. Perfectly.

Lovell. Perfectly! how do you mean?

Mrs. L. Mean? Henry! That you love me. Don't you?

Lovell. Love you, Fanny! can you doubt it? But do you find it dull here, Fanny?

Mrs. L. Not in the least. Yet it is very odd I have seen so few of my acquaintances lately. I wonder what is become of Frank Archer, Roper, Wilmot and our other friends?

Lovell. *(his countenance altered)* Fanny! there

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is nothing more indelicate than calling men by their names.

Mrs. L. Ha, ha, ha! How are they to be called then?

Lovell. Surely, it is more delicate to say Mr. in speaking of men; and particularly such youths as Mr. Archer, Mr. Roper, and Mr. Wilmot.

Mrs. L. Psha! you are too nice. Besides, don't I often call Mr. Spectre, Spectre? and you never took notice of it.

Lovell. But that's very different.—Come now, you know that's very different. Spectre's my friend: a worthy, though not a handsome man—a man incapable of giving me pain.

Mrs. L. Very—But what pain did ever Mr. Roper, Mr. Archer, or Mr. Wilmot, give you?

Lovell. Pain! They? I did not say they ever did, did I?

Mrs. L. Not exactly—Yet—

Lovell, Yet! This is very provoking of you, Fanny, to put such a construction on my words. *They* give me pain indeed!

Enter Cuffee.

Cuffee. Massa 'Pectre in de parla, sa, waiting to know if he may come up.

Lovell. Show him up.

Cuffee gives the cards of the visitors privately to Lovell.

Mrs. L. Who has been here to day? I have heard several raps at the door.

Cuffee. To-day, Misses? Oh, Mr. 'Pectre, Mr. Leeson, who no 'top, but only say how dee: Mr. 'Pectre who come in, and two mistake.

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Mrs. L. It's very odd! scarcely a day passes without some mistakes.

Cuffee. Ebery day, ebery day, Misses. People fool for come lose deir way here. [*Exit.*

Lovell. Before Spectre comes up, let me beg of you, my dear Fanny, to give up all thoughts of bringing the Melvils into company, or even of seeing them in private. I have reason to believe that the intrigue between Lord Sedley and the daughter is by no means at an end.

Mrs. L. I am confident it never had a beginning. Emily Melvil is both virtuous and amiable.

Lovell. Her paramour has been lately seen here.

Mrs. L. Scandalous! She has no paramour. To please you, Henry, I have sacrificed to appearances. I go but seldom to Emily, but my sentiments of her will never change. I shall leave you with Mr. Spectre.

Lovell. Should he ask for you, shall I send him while I equip myself for riding?

Mrs. L. As you like—it is a matter of total indifference to me. [*Exit.*

Lovell. Charming creature! This is just as it ought to be. It should be a matter of total indifference to every married woman, whether she ever sees a man but her husband—*(pauses)* But Spectre is such an ugly fellow, indifference is no proof of virtue. Would the case have been the same had he been handsome? I'll not try her. I know the sex too well.—It was a damned piece of folly in me to marry; but being married I must have her whole heart, her whole attention. No handsome puppy shall share a glance. My mind is oppressed—Oh, that I had a friend whom

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I could trust and consult! Here comes Spectre. May I not confide in him?—I will. An antidote himself to love, he will enter into all my feelings, render me service in flapping off the flies, and be the very friend I want.

Enter Spectre.

My dear Tom, how do you do?

Spectre. How are you Lovell?

Lovell. Any thing new.

Spectre. That notorious gallant Lord Sedley is at St. Ives.

Lovell. So I find by a card he has just left here.

Spectre. Are you intimate with him?

Lovell. Not so much as formerly.

Spectre. How does Mrs. Lovell do?

Lovell. Well, and more beautiful than ever, Tom. You shall go and see her presently.

Spectre. I'll take your word; my visit is to *you.*

Lovell. (aside) Mutual indifference! Ugly and indifferent! Just what a friend should be. Did you see Sedley!

Spectre. I passed him at the King's Arms. He is remarkably handsome. Do you mean to see him?

Lovell. I! I see him! What here?

Speetre. No, no! no, no! There was a dev'lish handsome fellow with him and Dawson.

Lovell. Ey! What! who?

Speetre. I'll describe my own figure and terrify him. *(aside.)* He has such a fine leg.

Lovell. Fine leg! fine leg! eh!

Spectre. Damn me, if ever I saw such a capital turned calf and ancle in all my life.

(looking at his own and Lovell's)

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Lovell. Curse his calf and leg! Who is it?

Spectre. Why it is—But the most striking part about him is just here—hereabouts *(putting his hands to his waists and hips, and imitating)* which makes him walk so graceful—the line of beauty, eh! The true line of beauty!

Lovell. (his face convulsed) Hah! walks graceful, eh!

Spectre. Impossible for any woman to resist such a walk—look!

Lovell. What's his name? *(agitated)*

Spectre. Why; why! what's the matter Lovell?

Lovell. Oh, nothing, nothing—*(affecting ease)* Who is it?

Spectre. The elegant Fitzalban.

Lovell. I wish there was no such thing as an elegant man in the world.

Spectre. We are great pests to be sure. What a jealous devil! *(aside)*

Lovell. Oh, Tom! I have an immense weight on my heart, which I long to lodge in the bosom of a friend.

Spectre. (aside) A very friendly longing!

Lovell. I have tried you, Spectre, for some time. Come, let's sit down. *(They take chairs)* For some months, my dear Tom, I have observed the amiable disinterestedness of your heart.

Spectre. Oh, my dear friend!

Lovell. I am sure I can confide in you. Every line of your *friendly* countenance assures me that I can.

Spectre. Humph!

Lovell. It is a countenance that cannot be mistaken; one that can never deceive or injure a friend.

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Spectre. Humph! It's well enough as times go—unbosom.

Lovell. (looking him full in the face, pausing, then taking his hand) Yes! 'tis an open honest face and I will confide in it.—Tom! I feel that I am married—

Spectre. Feel!

Lovell. Yes—I feel it here. *(pressing his bosom)*

Spectre. Why, damn it! that's almost as bad as feeling it here. *(pointing to his forehead)*

Lovell. It is not that I doubt Mrs. Lovell's honour, Tom. No, by my own I swear, I believe her virtuous. But I know the sex so well. Not one of them but may be won by address and a fresh face. When first I saw my Fanny she was surrounded by lovers—to make her mine I was compelled to marry.

Spectre. Shocking alternative!

Lovell. I became miserable—Every smile she bestowed upon another shot a poisoned dart into my soul. I could not endure it. By degrees I secluded her from the company of men, because I knew too well that men would assail her heart—Oh, woman, woman!

Spectre. Oh lovely woman! (*sympathising ludicrously*) But I am not so well acquainted with the sex as you are.

Lovell. True.

Spectre. Damme, not so true, neither. (*aside.*

Lovell. Happy fellow! nature has been kind to *you,* for it is much better to have been cast in friendship's mould than in love's.

Spectre. What *do you* mean? (*staring at Lovell.*

Lovell. Not but—that—you are—extremely—a, a, a, extremely—you know what I would say—

Spectre. No I don't—I be damned if I do.

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Lovell. My dear Tom, don't be tetchy—I mean —don't be captious now—I mean, *comme il faut,* proper, personable, very—

Spectre. (*rising*) Damme, he means to tell me to my face that I am ugly. (*aside.*)

Lovell. (*rising*) Zounds! I believe Tom thinks he is handsome. (*aside.*)

Spectre. But I'll be revenged. (*aside.*)

Lovell. I say, Tom, that in spite of your being a, a, personable man (you are indeed, Tom, a very personable man) yet you are less a seducer than most men.

Spectre. (*aside.*) I'll make you pay for this.

Lovell. From principle I mean. Indeed, I am sure entirely free from it.

Spectre. Lord, you know it a'nt in me!—We'll see though. (*aside.*)

Lovell. To you, therefore, I open my heart. It is impossible to avoid going sometimes into company, and giving occasional dinners—do, my friend, at those times be very assiduous in your attentions to my wife—talk to her, sit by her, keep off all puppies from her.

Spectre. I will, I will.—Just what I wish. (*aside.*) I'll never leave her.—I'll be with her morning, noon, and night. There's my hand.

Lovell. What a load is off my mind, thanks to the friendship of my dear Spectre! Now go, go and ask Mrs. Lovell how she does, while I prepare for my ride.

Spectre. Shall you be long?

Lovell. Eh! why do you ask?

Spectre. Only that if you should be long, I'd take a book and sit here till you return, or soliloquize, or go into the garden and ruralize.

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Lovell. (*smiling*) I must of course be some time —but go or stay as you like.

Spectre. Very well, good bye!—Line of beauty—

(*aside, and surveying himself.*)

Lovell. Good bye, Tom. (*going, returns.*) I say, Tom, if you should go to Mrs. Lovell—I have lately found her very nervous—avoid saying any thing witty—it will affect her nerves.

Spectre. Lord bless you—How came you to think of that? I witty! I am nervous myself.—Nothing is so bad for the nerves as wit. Good bye!

Lovell. You have some humourous stories though —eh!—Don't, now, introduce any of them.—You can't conceive how a grave look becomes your turn of countenance.—Good bye!—He has lost two coatings of his ugliness since I confided in him.

(*aside and exit.*

Spectre. Ha—h! (*grins.*) I have him. Now for my better self. (*begins changing his dress.*) He can't be less than half an hour. (*puts on the dashing wig.*) I'll step in, give the divine Fanny one of my glances, do the mischief like Jupiter in a metamorphosis, and return sloven Tom before he is back. Your jealous tikes are always fair game. Lovell was a rake-helly fellow before he married, so it is but tit for tit.—Nothing could be better imagined for the neck, (*exposes his neck, putting on his neck-cloth at a glass*) than this elegant machine, which fills up the vacant spaces of the throat, and gives an amiable degree of rotundity to a long face, by cutting off the chin. Am I ugly now Mr. Lovell? Am I formed in friendship's mould now, Mr. Lovell? (*surveying himself.*)

Lovell, (without) Tell Bob to let me know when the horses are ready.

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Spectre. Zounds! he's coming up. What shall I do? *(begins transforming himself in a hurry and runs to bolt the door)* By George! there is neither key nor bolt to any lock in his house. *(stands against the door)* He must not see me.

When Spectre *has nearly transformed himself,* Lovell *tries to open the door, and finding resistance pulls with violence. As he forces open the door,* Spectre *pulling off his black wig with one hand, hooks the flap of his coat on the knob of the lock with the other. This is accompanied with the dialogue.*

Lovell. Bring up my coat, Cuffee.—Tom! Tom! Tom Spectre!

Spectre. Eh!

Lovell. What's the matter? What's the matter?

Spectre. What's the matter? Didn't you call me?

(Runs to the front of the Stage

(Enter Lovell *in his gown, agitated, one boot on, the other in his hand.*

Lovell. What was the door shut for?

Spectre. Would you have me sit with it open?

Lovell. But, why was it locked?

Spectre. Locked? Devil a key there is to it.

Lovell. No prevarication, Mr. Spectre.

Spectre. Preposterous—dammee—what would you be at?

Lovell. What were you about at the door, Sir.

Spectre. Door! about at the door? Didn't you call me? and when I got to the door, didn't you in your vehemence push against me and catch the flap of my coat on the knob? How can you be

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so damned ridiculous? I take it very ill of you Mr. Lovell—I do indeed.

Lovell. *(coming to himself)* Lovell, Lovell! thou art an egregious ass! *(aside)* Tom, my dear Tom! I ask your pardon, I only thought, as you were alone, I might, merely for the pleasure of your company, come and just put on my boots here. Sit down, my friend, sit down. (Lovell *takes a chair and labours to draw on a tight boot)* Come, sit down, Tom.

Spectre. I was going to see Mrs. Lovell for a minute.

Lovell. Eh! Ah! Do so, do so, and then we'll go out together.

Spectre. Just as you like.—Jealous dog! I'll do for the fellow, that I will. *(aside and exit)*

Lovell. These damned boots! *(tugs)* There's no trusting a woman even with such a piece of stuff as my friend Spectre. Novelty, novelty *(tugs at the boots)* has a greater charm for the fickle sex than any other recommendation; and Tom, *(tugs)* Tom Spectre tells a story with considerable humour. I have seen it give that ghastly grin of his the air of a smile.

(Mrs. Lovell *laughs within.)*

There! he is telling her one now. I must go to them.—Oh! Confound new boots! *(Spectre talks within, she laughs)* There! There again! *(rises and tugs.)*

(Enter an ugly Groom.)

Groom. The horses are ready, sir.

Lovell. Damn the horses,

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(Enter Cuffee with a coat.)

Cuffee. You coat, massa!
Lovell. Damn the coat! Damn the boots!

Mrs. Lovell *laughs again, on which* Lovell *runs out with the boot half on. The Groom and Cuffee stare at each other and exeunt.*

End of Act First.

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ACT II.

SCENE.—*An Inn at St. Ives.*

(Fitzalban, Lord Sedley, *and* Dawson.)

All. Ha, ha, ha!

Fitz. (*warmly.*) Nay hear me. I am extremely impressed with the obligation I received from her mother. I think you are mistaken, my Lord. A jaded hack I had hired to cross the country fell with me towards evening near her cottage. I was stunned by a blow, taken up senseless and carried into Miss Melvil's little parlour, where all that hospitality and benevolence could suggest was heaped upon me. She sent for a surgeon, who advised my staying the night.

Dawson. Which you readily consented to, on seeing the lovely Emily.

Fitz. No, on my honour. I left the house not only without seeing Miss Melvil, but without knowing there existed such a person. Early this morning calling to repeat my thanks to Mrs. Melvil, I broke in unexpectedly on her daughter. Both of them appeared to me scrupulously delicate. They even declined my visits.

Lord S. Exactly! Just so they began with me. The mother is a good sort of a woman, but poor, and necessity has no law. She pretended ignorance through the whole affair. At length the girl began to talk of reputation, the signal for my decamping. Take care, Mr. Fitzalban, take care.

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Fitz. Really, my Lord, there is little danger after what I have heard, (*seriously*) particularly as I cannot suspect a friend of Dawson's of traducing an innocent woman.

Lord S. Well gentlemen,—You are for Cambridge, I for Huntingdon,—a pleasant ride.

Dawson. My Lord, I'll go a little way with you.

Fitz. Dawson! remember we dine here.

Dawson. I shall be back presently. [*Exeunt.*

Fitz. (*after a pause*) Now would I have given fifty acres of the richest soil on the banks of the Severn that this girl had not played the fool.

Enter a Waiter.

Waiter. A young woman, sir, from the country wishes to speak to you.

Fitz. Show her in. (*exit waiter.*) Who can this be?

Enter Lucy.

Fitz. What! little Lucy! Do you bring me a message from your young mistress?

Lucy. Lord, sir! If my mistress thought I was here she would never forgive me. Dear Mr. Fitzalban forgive this liberty. My poor, dear, young lady is as good as she is handsome. There is a vile plot laid against her.

Fitz. Compose yourself: what do you mean?

Lucy. I am so flurried, sir, but Lord Sedley's man has told me the whole plot. It is plainly this: his Lordship conceived that Miss Emily would be compelled, when deserted by the world, to throw herself into his arms: the desertion he has completely effected, by forged letters and slander;

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but, failing in the other hope, he is this very afternoon going to carry her off by force to his seat in Warwickshire.

Fitz. By heaven! she is pure.

Lucy. That you may say indeed, sir: but I hope you will shoot him.

Fitz. I will—I will. By!—No, I wont—

Lucy. Pray do. I came on purpose because you looked to me as if you would.

Fitz. A happy thought! Has your mistress any friends at St. Ives?

Lucy. I know but one lady who has not deserted her, and she is married to a crony of Lord Sedley's, who is afraid to let any one see her.

Fitz. I must see her.

Lucy. You! Oh la! why, his house is like an enchanted castle, guarded by dragons and wild beasts.

Fitz. What's his name?

Lucy. Lovell.

Fitz. I know his house. Come, then, with me: for you must not see your mistress till my plan is executed, or you will injure it. Lovely Emily! How delightful it is to expose villany and rescue innocence! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE.—*The Room at Lovell's house.*

Enter Lovell booted, "Cuffee following.

"*Lov.* How long has Lord Sedley's man been "here?

"*Cuffee.* Only lilly while, sa.

"*Lov.* Did he bring a letter for your mistress?

"*Cuffee.* No, massa.

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" *Lov.* Has he seen her?
" *Cuffee.* Misses no know he here.
" *Lov.* With whom did she go out?
" *Cuffee.* She go wid—
" *Lov.* Eh?
" *Cuffee.* Haself, massa.
" *Lov.* Did any body come home with her?
" *Cuffee.* No, sa.
" *Lov.* Where can she have been? I don't like
" that fellow's being here when his master was so
" strenuous to keep me at Huntingdon.—(*To Cuf-*
" *fee.*) Harkee! turn him out as soon as you can.
" *Cuffee.* Before he hab him corn, massa?
" *Lov.* You fool! I don't mean my horse; but
" that fellow in the kitchen.
" *Cuffee.* Yes! sa.—He, he, he! he great deal
" too handsome for 'top wid dose maids. [*Exit.*"

Lov. Fool that I am, to rest my happiness on a woman, to love my wife! Hang it, I'll conquer this anxious temper.—It is very unworthy a man of sense, I'll make myself easy—perfectly easy.—Why should'nt I? I, who know so well that constancy is not in nature—why should I expect to change nature? (*pauses*) Then, by giving way to fancy, one may in fact become jealous and ridiculous.

Enter Mrs. Lovell.

Mrs. L. Why! Henry!

Lov. You seem surprised, Fanny.

Mrs. L. To be sure I am; I am but just returned myself from Mrs. Melvil's.—Nay! don't frown now: I promise you, I'll go there no more.—I begin to think as you do. Some spark I found had been at the cottage this morning; and it could only be Sedley.

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Lov. How could you doubt it?

Mrs. L. But what brings you home so soon? From your letter I did not expect you till the evening.

Lov. You are not sorry for the alteration, I hope, Fanny.

Mrs. L. *Peutêtre que oui, peutêtre que non.* *(gaily.)*

Lov. Playful, lovely creature! *(attempts to fondle her.)*

Mrs. L. Now, don't do so.

Lov. Why not?

Mrs. L. Because I don't like it.

Lov. Don't like it! don't like it!

Mrs. L. No—yes, yes, yes—but I understood from your letter that you were to dine in Huntingdon, with Lord Sedley.

Lov. Puppy! It was to prevent his dining with me: for when we met, he proposed to return and spend the day with us. Knowing how you detest the character of a rake, I pretended business would detain me, and offered to dine with him at the inn.

Mrs. L. Why not say you were engaged?

Lov. Because he has assurance enough to have come and dined alone with you. Thank heaven! he recollected a prior engagement, and released me. He is devoid of principle. I hate the fellow. Do you think him handsome?

Mrs. L. Beauty, my dear Henry, depends so much on taste, and taste is so fluctuating a thing.

Lov. You think taste a fluctuating thing?

Mrs. L. I am convinced the mind is entirely swayed by habit, from the effect it has on myself.

Lov. Yourself!

Mrs. L. You will hardly credit what I am going to say.

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Lov. What?

Mrs. L. You know what an ugly fellow I thought the coachman; that I could hardly bear to look at Bob, and that I absolutely forsook the garden for three weeks, because I could not endure the sight of the gardener.

Lov. Well.

Mrs. Lov. By degrees the disagreeable sensation wore off.

Lov. Humph!

Mrs. L. Finding them uncommonly civil in their duty, I became pleased.

Lov. Humph!

Mrs. L. From being pleased I began to look at their faces with interest.

Lov. With interest?—*(aside)* A very nice gradation, from disgust to affection.

Mrs. L. When once the mind feels an interest, the eye becomes blind to defects. I declare I wonder why I thought the coachman ugly—

Lov. Hah!

Mrs. L. I think Bob has a pleasing countenance—

Lov. Heh!

Mrs. L. And the gardener seems almost as agreeable to the sight as the nosegay he presents me.

Lov. The devil! I have perverted her taste. (*aside.*)

Mrs. L. Then my friend, Spectre.

Lov. Her friend! (*aside.*)

Mrs. L. You remember, he was more disgusting to me than the coachman, Bob, and the gardener, all put together.

Lov. Who could have thought this! *(aside.)*

Mrs. L. Now I think him a most agreeable creature; and rather handsome than otherwise, don't you?

Lov. I really cannot say I think him handsome.

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Mrs. L. That's because you never saw him dressed.

Lov. Dressed!

Mrs. L. You allow he tells a story with great humour.

Lov. (*aside*) Hell and confusion! I have been pandering for the monster.—Oh! certainly.

Mrs. L. What's the matter Henry? I know I give you pleasure by what I say of our mutual friend, Spectre.

Lov. Undoubtedly. (*aside*) Mutual friend! yes, yes, I have completely perverted her taste.

Mrs. L. Are you ill my love? (*fondling him*)

Lov. Prithee, don't.

Mrs. L. Why not?

Lov. I don't like it.

Mrs. L. You did, when I came in; don't be cross.

Lov. My head achs. (*muses*)

Mrs. L. Your heart achs; but I shall cure it. (*aside.*)

Lov. (*aside*) No—she speaks too gaily and unreservedly of her feelings, to be quite corrupted yet. —Heigho!

Mrs. L. What a sigh?

Lov. Fanny do you love me?

Mrs. L. Have you any reason to doubt it?

Lov. No reason, my love; yet nature, as you observed, is so liable to be swayed by habit—a woman that loved her husband, would perhaps scruple familiarizing herself even to the sight of ugliness.

Mrs. L. Ha ha ha!

Lov. Nay, I see nothing to laugh at. It is a species of infidelity, Fanny, to—(*a knocking*) Who have we here?

Mrs. L. (*running to the side scene*) Cuffee! Cuffee!

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Enter Cuffee.

Lov. What does this mean?

Mrs. L. If that's Mr. Spectre, don't let him know that your master is at home, but show him into the parlour.

Cuffee. Yes, ma'am. [*Exit.*

Lov. Do you expect him?

Mrs. L. I----(*hesitating*)

Lov. (*aside*) By heaven! she hesitates. You don't answer.

Mrs. L. I do expect him.

Lov. Have you seen him, or heard from him?

Mrs. L. I met him when I was out.

Lov. And not satisfied with seeing him in the morning, and again when you went out, you must see him a third time in the same day, by appointment.—Why, common decency—

Mrs. L. Jealous of Spectre?

Lov. Why not of Spectre? Don't I know your taste is perverted? Don't I know you love deformity? (*vehemently.*)

Mrs. L. Ha, ha, ha! Poor Henry!

Lov. Answer me one question.

Mrs. L. Well! what is it?

Lov. Hav'nt you a taste for ugly people.

Mrs. D. Ha, ha, ha! Jealous, by all that's beautiful!

Lov. Swear by deformity, madam; for that's the object of your capricious fancy. Is *not deformity agreeable* to you?

Mrs. L. No, Henry, no,—but I am agreeable to deformity. Come, come, Lovell! purify your heart of this weak humour of yours, and you will never lose mine.

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Lovell. What is it you mean?

Mrs. L. Men of licentious lives are justly punished by the thorn they plant in their own bosoms. There are some frail creatures among women, Henry, as there are some paltroons among men; but be assured that bravery is not more characteristic of your sex than constancy is of mine.

Lovell. True, my love—and indeed Fanny—You did not expect me home, though.

(Enter Cuffee.)

Cuffee. He! he! he! Mr. 'Pectre, Ma'am:—he! he! he!

Mrs. L. What's the matter, Cuffee?

Cuffee. Mr. 'Pectre so gay, Ma'am, he! he! he!

Mrs. L. Does he know that your master is at home?

Cuffee. No, Ma'am.

Mrs. L. Show him up.

Cuffee. He! he! he! Mr. 'Pectre very fine, Ma'am: so handsome you no will know him again. He! he! he! [*Exit Cuffee.*

Lovell. Was it an appointment?

Mrs. L. He comes to declare his passion, I have no doubt. Step into this closet, and believe your own eyes and ears if you can.

Lovell. Lovely woman! Never more will I admit a moment's uneasiness.

Mrs. L. Leave the door ajar.

Lovell. I will. Did you meet him by chance?

Mrs. L. In, in—and let what will happen, do not come out till I call you.—Nay, promise me.

Lovell. I do.

Mrs. L. In—he is on the stairs.

(Lovell goes in and peeps.)

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Lovell. Who the devil is this! Impossible.

(Enter Spectre outré.)

Mrs. L. Well, Spectre! your eagerness delights me. I did not expect you so soon.

Lovell. Zounds! he must have shaken hands with her before, he does it so familiarly now.

Spectre (shaking hands with Mrs. Lovell, *and pressing her's to his heart with a ludicrous look and sigh.)* I could not delay the happiness of my tete-à-tete, lest I should lose it; for well, I know, that Lovell will be flying back on the wings of jealousy.

Mrs. L. And you really think him jealous?

Spectre. As I told you in the morning, more so than a Turk—though a Turk guards his doors with bolts, locks and padlocks—now Lovell, haw! haw! Lovell strips every door in his house of its key—not a bar to be seen—not even a puny, little, brass bolt—haw! haw! haw!

Lovell. Observant monster.

Spectre. Did it never strike you?

Mrs. L. Never.

Spectre. It is very convenient for a husband to pop into a room unobstructed.

Mrs. L. Not so convenient, perhaps, for his friend?

Spectre. That's good; that's good—ha! ha! ha! You have the finest wit. But, my dear Mrs. Lovell, how long am I to sigh in vain?

Lovell. How long! This is not the first time, then.

Mrs. L. Nay, Spectre, did you ever before open your mind to me? I had no conception of having inspired you with such a passion; nor till this morning did I ever see you so dressed.

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Spectre. Dressed! *(surveys himself.)*

Mrs. L. Such taste!

Spectre. Do you like it?

Mrs. L. It is so becoming: you are not the same being.

Lovell. Amiable woman! I see she is exposing him.

Spectre. Do you think if I had not taken pains to make myself look ugly, that Lovell would ever have admitted me into his house? Do you think, if he could take a peep at me now, that I should ever enter it again? *(loud knocking.)*
Heh! what! come home already! what shall I do?
(beginning to alter his dress.)

Mrs. L. What are you about? It is not he—it is not his knock. *(Noise on the stairs.)*

Spectre. (trembling) Good Lord! He is coming up.

Mrs. L. I am sure, it is not he.—But, at all events, get you into my dressing room. I'll get rid of this intruder, and call you back immediately. *(noise continued)* What ails you? pray, go.

Spectre. I will—I will. [*Exit trembling.*

(The noise close at the door.)

Lov. Oho! I'll even remain where I am, and try to believe my own eyes and ears.

Enter Fitzalban, *pushing in* Cuffee.

Cuffee. Not at home, sa—Massa will come down 'tairs, sa.

Fitz. Hang your master! It is your mistress I want—and here she is, with a countenance that betokens charity, and a grace that cannot deny the boon I come to implore.

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Lov. No perversion of taste here, however. Oh, woman! woman!

Mrs. L. Sir, not having the honour to know you—

Fitz. But you shall know me, Madam. You are the friend of Miss Melvil?

Mrs. L. I was once.

Fitz. Oh! be so still, and be assured no woman on earth is more worthy of your esteem. Away with doubts—Help me to be the instrument of restoring this lovely young woman's fame, and I will adore you.

Mrs. L. Can you restore her honour?

Fitz. On my soul, it never was forfeited. I speak only of reputation, of which she has been robbed by a villain and the ready combination of credulity and envy. She is pure as she is beautiful.

" *Mrs. L.* You are warm, sir.

" *Fitz.* Does not your heart justify my warmth? " By heaven! if I succeed in this, I shall have " more delight than in all the pleasures wealth and " beauty can bestow."

Mrs. L. Sir, you have imparted to my heart the feelings which glow in your own; yet much as I should enjoy Miss Melvil's triumph, I am convinced the attempt is fruitless,

Fitz. It is certain. Lord Sedley is the most consummate villain in nature.

Mrs. L. And that consummate villain was with Miss Melvil this morning.

Fitz. No.

Mrs. L. Yes. I am myself but just come from the cottage.

Fitz. You are under a mistake. *I* was there in the morning, and have since seen Lucy. I pledge my life it is a new lie of Lord Sedley's.

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Mrs. L. Were you at the cottage to-day? Then I have wronged her. Dear, dear, Emily!

Fitz. Come then, and help me to repair all her wrongs—come along *(seizing her hands)* we have no time to lose.

Mrs. L. Stay, stay, good sir—I neither know your plan, nor am I my own mistress.

Fitz. Every woman is her own mistress in doing a good action; and as to my plan, it is this: Though I have clear proof of Lord Sedley's report being an infamous slander, I do not ask you to rely upon it, but to come and take the evidence of your own senses. Lord Sedley still enamoured of Miss Melvil, will, in less than an hour, attempt to carry her off by force. "He has intelligence that she is "to be at a little cottage at some distance from her own. Now let us be there first, and so place our-"selves as to overhear, unobserved, all that passes."

Lov. (*coming forward*) Give me this proof and I will believe that there are honourable men and virtuous women. Sir, the glow you have communicated to my wife's heart, you have likewise imparted to mine, though I blush that I came not by it so honourably.

Fitz. Mr. Lovell, I presume. My name, sir, is Fitzalban. If you and Mrs. Lovell will do me the honour to be guided by me but for one hour, you will be the happier for it, for the remainder of your lives.

Mrs. L. (*putting on her hat, &c.*) Come, Henry, let's begone.

Lov. With all my heart.

Fitz. Bless you both! Pray, favour me with your hand.

Lov. There's no need of that.

Mrs. L. Oh fie! What Henry! doubting again!

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Lov. Well, well!—I'll follow immediately.
(*All going.*

Mrs. L. Stop, stop! This glowing youth has put enamoured deformity out of our heads.

Lov. That's true. Leave him to me.—I'll overtake you.

Exit Fitzalban *and* Mrs. Lovell.

What does not this fellow deserve! My wife is gone off with that handsome fellow, though! Hey! Thank heaven there is *one* key in the house, and that's to my wife's dressing-room. By your leave, enamoured Mr. Spectre! (*locks the door.*) Zounds! if I don't make haste, they will be there before me.
[*Exit.*

SCENE.—*Martha's Cottage. Martha busying herself.*

(*Enter* Fitzalban, Mrs. Lovell, *and* Dawson, *and immediately after* Lovell *out of breath.*

Mrs. L. Henry! you must have flown.

Fitz. Faith! I think we have spread as nice a net here for slander as ever beast was caught with; "and if we cannot kill the foul hag, we will at "least give her tongue one slit more."

Mrs. L. I wish Mrs. Melvil had been with us!

Dawson. That was impossible without apprizing Miss Melvil of the scheme.

Fitz. Hark!—Good folks to your post.

Mrs. L. (*to Lovell*) Is'nt he a fine fellow?

Lov. Very, very. (*they retire.*)

Fitz. Now remember, Martha, if Miss Melvil comes first, you are to detain her here till Lord Sedley arrives: if he is first, be very civil, and keep

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him away from the other room. Hark! It is the chaise.—The villain is first. What can be sweeter than my feelings at this moment! (*goes in.*)

Martha. I must not be idle.

(*busies herself about the room.*)

Enter Lord Sedley.

Lord S. How do do? old woman!

Martha. (*curtesies.*) What does your honour want?

Lord S. Has not Miss Melvil informed you, Martha?

Martha. No your honour, but she be a coming. Bless her! she be an angel from heaven.

Lord S. She has been very good to you (*giving a purse.*) Here, accept assistance from me too.

Martha. Thank your honour.

Lord S. I have left my handkerchief in the carriage; step and bring it me. The chaise stands a little way up the lane.

Martha. I will your honour. Thank your honour. [*Exit.*

Lord S. The boys will secure her—and now I cannot fail. I'll travel all night—my relays are ready at proper places; money, a plausible tale, and gentle coercion, will clear the way to Sedley-Castle. (*Looks out and runs behind the door.*)

Enter Emily.

Emily. Martha, Mar—(*seeing Lord Sedley*) What does this mean! For what purpose are you here?

Lord S. (*moving his arms, and seizing her by the wrists.*) To teach you to be happy, Emily. You must go with me directly.

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Emily. Go!—(*struggling.*) Martha! Martha!

Lord S. Oh—She is safe enough.

Emily. Unhand me immediately. What will become of me? Release my hands!

Lord S. I would rather win than force your love. You are the cause of your own unhappiness and mine.

Emily. Was I the traducer of my own fame, villain?

" *Lord S.* You prize the opinion of the world " too highly: but, at all events, it cannot now be " recovered. Despise it then, and turn your " thoughts to a happiness independent of it.

" *Emily.* Don't mistake me, sir.—Painful as the " loss of friends, as the loss of the good opinion of " the world is, it is pleasure, compared to the torture " the mind must endure from conscious vice."

Lord S. And think you nothing of leading me on from day to day with hope?

Emily. Inhuman slanderer! You cannot yourself believe what you assert. You know that I repeated to you my fixed determination never to give my hand to any man who had not previously interested my heart; and when you betrayed a dishonourable purpose, did not my mother join me in dismissing you for ever?

Lord S. Time will change your language; meanwhile my chaise waits to carry us to Sedley Castle.

Fitzalban, Lovell, Mrs. Lovell, *and* Dawson *rush out.*

Fitz. Huzza! huzza!

Lord S. You may repent this, sir.

Fitz. Why lookee, Lord! I should have no objection to shoot you, as little Lucy advised me, but

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sir, you are a disgrace to the rank you were born to, and I leave you to the contempt you merit.

Lord S. Fortune has foiled me. I must yield to her and fly. (*aside.*)

" *Lov.* Stay, Lord Sedley, and hear me. My " Lord! we have been companions in error and in " vice. You have gone far beyond me; for with " such conviction of the existence of virtue afforded " by this young lady, none but yourself could have " been an infidel. The belief of your slander of " her, confirmed my erroneous opinion of the sex; " an opinion that has embittered many months of " my life, which would otherwise have been at- " tended with complete felicity. Witness now my " shame and my recantation. Oh, Miss Melvil! O " Fanny! forgive me. You have convinced me " that women are pure and constant. I bless you " for it; and my future life shall atone for the in- " justice of the past. You, Fitzalban! have con- " vinced me that men can admire and love with " honour. I thank you. Here let me reclaim, and " be happy. (*takes Mrs. Lovell's hand.*)"

Lord S. Enjoy your triumph. At least I have not made myself contemptible as a jealous husband, and though you may censure my conduct, I can still enjoy the gratification of laughing at yours. [*Exit.*

All. Ha, ha, ha!

Mrs. L. Dear Emily, how shall we ever make amends?

Dawson. By reporting loudly the fact you have now witnessed.

Fitz. And by being doubly cautious in future, in reporting facts which you have *not* witnessed.

Lov. And now, my friends, I have another object for your contempt. Let us hasten back to my

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house, where you shall witness the exposure of a most ridiculous compound of villany and vanity.

[*Exeunt.*

Scene changes to Lovell's *Apartment.*

Spectre *still locked up, sings within.*

Enter Lovell, Mrs. Lovell, Fitzalban, Dawson, &c.

Mrs. Lovell *taps at the door, which she unlocks, having received the key from* Lovell.

Mrs. L. Spectre! Spectre! You may come out.

She runs back to the company, who have retired to the lower part of the stage. Spectre *capers in.—As soon as he sees* Lovell *he begins to alter his dress, but does not complete the alteration.*

Lov. Ah Tom! You there? How do you do, Tom? How do you do?

Spectre. How—how—do—you—do?—Mr. Lovell?

Lov. Why so formal, Tom? What are you about?

Spectre. Only adjusting my clothes, which I had somewhat discomposed.

Lov. Clothes! What do you call these things? and these? (*Whips him over the pantaloons.*)

Spectre. Hollo, hollo! That smarts, though.

Lov. Zounds, Tom! I should be jealous if my wife were at home. What's this? *(pulling the neck-cloth from him.)*

Spectre. That? That thing? To be sure, it has rather an odd appearance in its present state, but it is only a roll of flannel for a sore throat.

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Lov. (surveying him) I begin to fear, Mr. Spectre, that you are not to be trusted with a pretty woman.

Spectre. Na——h! my friend!

Lov. There's something so engaging in that open, honest face of yours.

Spectre. Baw! Pooh!

Lov. A Turk would certainly secure the exclusion of so fascinating a youth by means of bolts, locks, and padlocks.

Spectre. (*aside*) I'm betrayed; he has overheard me. Foregad, I'll brave it. He must be a coward or he would have kicked me before this for making love to his wife.

(*Adjusts his dress, wig, &c. and puts himself into a careless attitude.*)

Well! Mr. Lovell, If men will throw their wives into the arms of enamoured youth—

Lov. You death's head upon a mopstick!

Spectre. So you thought—but, you see, I disfigured myself for your sake. Am I cast in friendship's mould? What you don't wish me to be assiduous any longer, eh? The line of beauty don't suit you, eh? Mustn't I sit by her, talk to her, keep off puppies, eh!

Lov. Harkee, sir!

Spectre. Keep off.

Lov. I will not demean myself, you scoundrel, to give you manual chastisement.

Spectre. You had best not.

Lov. Sir, leave my house.

Spectre. Yes, yes! he he! you'll not leave your wife alone with a handsome man again.

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Lov. Eh! that's true—Fitzalban's a handsome fellow *(aside, and looks anxiously round on* Fitzalban *and* Mrs. Lovell.) I'll watch you, Sir. *(to Spectre.)*

Spectre. Ha, ha, ha! You had better watch your wife! A lucky escape. *(All laugh, and he sees the company.)* I am made for ever, for the intrigue must circulate with so many witnesses. Hah! I sha'nt be able to pass, without being hailed Spectre Adonis; and I shall be handed down to posterity with Hogarth's Analysis of Beauty. *(sings and exit.)*

Emily. Mr. Fitzalban! Mrs. Lovell has informed me of my obligation to you. How little did my mother, think, Sir, that her hospitality to a stranger would be rewarded with such a blessing! Accept my thanks.

Fitz. Thanks! for feasting my own heart!—A heart, Miss Melvil, that—what am I saying? Your look tells me that my hopes are unseasonably expressed.—Come, then, let us go and make Mrs. Melvil happy—And may the events of this day prove another scourge to calumny; and a Lesson for Libertines.

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THE END.

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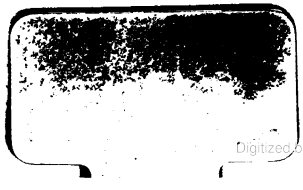
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